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NIKKI HALEY LAUNCHES HER 2024 U.S. PRESIDENTIAL BID

The prominent Indian-American politician has become the first Republican to challenge former president Donald Trump

'U.S. NEEDS A GENERATIONAL CHANGE'

Haley, 51, is the two-term governor of South Carolina. She has also served as US Ambassador to the United Nations. In 2021, she had said that she wouldn't challenge Trump for the White House but changed her mind in recent months citing the need for "generational change". "It's time for a new generation of leadership to rediscover fiscal responsibility, secure our border..." she said | P14

3RD INDIAN-AMERICAN TO RUN FOR PREZ

- "I don't put up with bullies. And when you kick back, it hurts them more if you're wearing heels," Haley said in a video message
- Born Nimrata Nikki Randhawa to immigrant Sikh parents, Haley is the third Indian-American to run for US presidency. Bobby Jindal ran in 2016 and the current US Vice President Kamala Harris in 2020

Joe Biden

INTENDS TO SEEK RE-ELECTION IN 2024, ACCORDING TO WHITE HOUSE

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BrahMos missile alone can take India's def exports to $3bn by 2026

RAMU PATIL @Bengaluru

WHILE Prime Minister Narendra Modi set an ambitious target of $5 billion to be achieved for India's defence exports by 2024-25 from the current $ 1.5 billion, the BrahMos supersonic missile alone has the potential of achieving $3 billion by 2026.

BrahMos Corporation, which specialises in supersonic cruise missiles, is all set to spearhead India's export push as many countries — especially those in South East Asia and the Middle-East — have shown a keen interest in acquiring the made-in-India missiles designed and developed jointly with Russia.

The Indo-Russian Joint Venture which has significantly enhanced the war-fighting capabilities of the Indian armed forces, will start exporting the missiles to the Philippines by the end of 2023 and is confident of getting more export orders.

"Everyone is interested in BrahMos," CEO and MD of BrahMos Aerospace, Atul D Rane told The New Indian Express on Tuesday. "The whole world looks at us, but we can only sell to countries agreeable to India and Russia. Whole of South East Asia is approaching us. The Philippines came on

board first. Middle-East is very interested."

Rane, who is also Outstanding Scientist, Director General (BrahMos), Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), said that in some cases the talks are in advanced stages. He hopes to take it forward during his visit to IDEX (The International Defence Exhibition and conference) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) next week.

The Corporation is bullish about the export potential of the missiles known for striking targets at supersonic speeds of up to 5-7 Mach (times the speed of sound) with precision. "BrahMos alone may be able to do around $3 billion by 2026," said Rane.

"PM has set a tough target, but we are making it tougher for ourselves. Why not? Take it as a challenge," he said.

BrahMos with a maximum range of 300 km is the export variant for land-, sea-, and air-based complexes. P12

HAL's hands full with ₹84K crore order book

Bengaluru: The order book of HAL is full with orders of Rs 84,000 crore while another Rs 50,000 crore of orders are in the pipeline. HAL CMD CB Ananthakrishnan said they are focusing on research and development to come up with more products. On the export front, Egypt and Argentina have shown interest in the homegrown LCA Tejas even as HAL is also trying to push the deal with Malaysia, despite some setbacks. P4

NEW BIRD IN THE SKY

An F-35 fighter jet performing during Aero India 2023 at Yelahanka Airbase in Bengaluru on Tuesday | SHASHIDHAR BYRAPPA | P4

TAX SURVEY ON BBC SPARKS FURORE

I-T department claims the British broadcaster had been flouting Transfer Pricing Rules to siphon out profits despite reminders

AMIT MUKHERJEE @ New Delhi

THE Income Tax department on Tuesday surveyed four premises of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), including in Delhi and Mumbai, over its alleged non-compliance of Transfer Pricing Rules (TPR), which sparked a global furore.

Coming as it did weeks after the BBC aired a controversial documentary, *India: The Modi Question* on the 2002 riots in Gujarat, the Opposition saw it as intimidation and vindictive action, while the BJP attacked the broadcaster for what it called 'venomous' reporting.

Sources claimed the BBC had illegally diverted profits out of India by flouting TPR provisions. TPR is applicable to multinationals operating in multiple global locations. Profits generated by offices of different countries come under the ambit of tax laws of the country of operations.

For its part, the BBC said it was fully cooperating with the tax authorities, adding it hoped the matter would be resolved as soon as possible.

According to sources, the BBC had been non-compliant with the TPR for years despite several reminders from the tax department. The focus of the survey was to look into manipulation of prices for unauthorised benefits, including tax advantages.

Media personnel outside the BBC office during an Income Tax survey, in New Delhi on Tuesday | PARVEEN NEGI

Synchronised action since 11 am

The action began at 11 am with income tax officials reaching BBC's offices in Delhi, Mumbai, Gurugram and one more location. The survey operation continued till late evening

The I-T department is empowered to conduct a survey on the premises of a business entity during business hours. It can search files, laptops, computers, hard drives or any other digital storage devices associated with the business entity, to collect information. However, raiding residences and other locations of its promoters or directors is out of scope for a survey.

BBC staffers were asked to deposit their phones at a particular spot inside the premises and cooperate. Some computers were seized and mobile phones of some staff members were cloned, officials said.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said no one is above the law and that the I-T department will share details about the survey after it is over.

Transfer pricing refers to prices of transactions between associated enterprises which may take place under conditions differing from those taking place between independent enterprises. It refers to the value attached to transfers of goods, services and technology between related entities. It also refers to the value attached to transfers between unrelated parties that are controlled by a common entity.

Intimidation tactics to muffle criticism: Oppn

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

OPPOSITION parties on Tuesday launched a blistering attack on the BJP government over taxmen's searches at BBC offices, calling them intimidation tactics, an assault on press freedom, and a bid to muffle criticism.

The British media outlet had recently aired a two-part series on the 2002 Gujarat riots, criticising Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his failure to check violence when he was the Gujarat chief minister back then.

"Time and again, there has been an assault on freedom of press under the Modi government. This is done with brazen and unapologetic vengeance to strangulate remotely critical voices," said Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge.

The taxmen's action will be seen as the government's 'petty retaliation' for the BBC documentary, said Congress MP Shashi Tharoor.

Poorly researched, says British MP

British MP Bob Blackman said in a TV interview that BBC does not represent the UK govt, adding that the documentary "is a hatchet job... result of poor journalism, is badly researched, and completely unjustified"

The Editors' Guild of India also condemned the searches, saying it was "deeply concerned" about what it termed the continuation of a "trend" of using agencies to "intimidate and harass" outlets critical of the government.

It recalled that similar surveys were conducted in 2021 at the offices of NewsClick, Newslaundry, Dainik Bhaskar and Bharat Samachar. "In each case, the raids and surveys were against the backdrop of critical coverage of the government establishment by the news organisations," the Guild said, adding: This is a trend that undermines constitutional democracy."

Meanwhile, the BJP sought to defend the move terming it a 'routine survey' that came after the broadcaster did not respond to a notice issued earlier. BJP national spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said the tax department's action is 'lawful' and that it should be allowed to do its job.

Air India's jumbo deal for 470 planes from Airbus, Boeing

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

IN one of the world's largest aviation orders, Tata group-owned Air India will buy a total of 470 wide-body and narrow-body aircraft from Airbus and Boeing. Out of this, 250 would be from Airbus and 200 from Boeing. While the company hasn't divulged the financial details, reports put the total deal value at $80 billion.

"The order comprises 40 Airbus A350s, 20 Boeing 787s and 10 Boeing 777-9s wide-body aircraft, as well as 210 Airbus A320/321 Neos and 190 Boeing 737 MAX single-aisle aircraft. The A350 aircraft will be powered by Rolls-Royce engines, and the B777/787s by engines from GE Aerospace," the airline said in a statement.

The first of the new aircraft will enter service in late 2023 and the bulk of the planes are expected to arrive from mid-2025 onwards, Air India added.

The mega deal has been welcomed by French President Emmanuel Macron, US President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

"My friend Macron, this is a landmark deal between Air India and Airbus and would further strengthen the bilateral relationship between India and France," said Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a virtual meeting with French President Macron on Tuesday.

"Dear Narendra, it is good to see you, even if it is virtually. Thank you for the strategic partnership. We have achieved a lot from India," said Macron.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak hailed a multi-billion-pound deal by Airbus and Rolls-Royce to supply new aircraft to Air India as a landmark moment for the country's aerospace sector.

Later, Modi and Biden had a telephonic conversation wherein the two leaders expressed satisfaction over the deepening of Indo-US ties.

Welcoming Air India's decision to buy 220 planes from Boeing, Biden said: "This purchase will support over 1 million American jobs across 44 states, and many will not require a four-year college degree. This announcement also reflects the strength of the US-India economic partnership."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with French President Emmanuel Macron via video conferencing. Tata group's Ratan Tata, Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson and Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury are also seen| PTI

Tension in Sir Creek after Pak's aggro

MAYANK SINGH @ New Delhi

TENSION appears to be building up between Pakistan Marines and the Border Security Force (BSF) in the strategically important Sir Creek area in Gujarat following the former's aggressive posturing. In response, the BSF has deployed resources in commensurate strength.

Confirming the ground situation in the area, sources said, "We have been working on improving the habitat of our troops on the ground to which the Pakistan Rangers objected and later mobilised their resources."

Since around a fortnight, India has been trying to build structures on its own side so as to improve the presence of troops. However, the Pakistan Navy's Marines not only objected but also mobilised their fast attack crafts and boats aggressively. "The local commanders responded befittingly and mobilised their matching resources," sources said. Local commanders have since held a meeting to try to defuse the tension.

A file picture of Indian jawans patrolling the border in the Kutch area | AM

There have been proposals to beef up the operational capabilities of the BSF formations in the area. As of now, the BSF operates with its floating Border Out Posts (BOPs) and a limited number of Fast Attack Crafts.

The floating BOPs of the marine wing of the BSF are fully equipped for operations that a border outpost would require if it were on land, officials said. Pakistan has Griffins Fast Attack Crafts but not floating BOPs.

As reported by this newspaper in January last, the BSF in Gujarat is strengthening its hold along Sir Creek and the Harami Nalla area by establishing permanent bases.

The BSF is tasked with securing the 826 km long Indo-Pak international border from Barmer in Rajasthan to the Rann of Kutch and the Creek area, including 85 km of coastal area of Gujarat.

The Creek is a 98 km long narrow strip of water between the two countries in the marshy areas of Rann of Kutch and opens up into the Arabian Sea. The area has inhospitable weather and terrain, while the marshes are home to poisonous snakes and scorpions. Last year, the BSF had apprehended 22 Pakistani fishermen and seized 79 boats along the marshy terrain in the Bhuj sector. The Indo-Pak border in Sir Creek is yet to be demarcated.

CHEQUE BOUNCE

Court to BJP MLA: Pay up ₹1.38 crore or go to prison

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A city court has convicted BJP MLA from Mudigere MP Kumaraswamy in eight cases of cheque bounce and sentenced him to pay a total amount of ₹1.38 crore to the complainant failing which the MLA will have to undergo a simple imprisonment of six months in each case.

Judge J Preeth convicted and sentenced Kumaraswamy for the offences punishable under Section 138 of the Negotiable Instruments Act.

"The accused has questioned the financial capacity of the complainant and has also gone to the extent of saying that he gave of a sum of Rs 1.40 crore to the complainant only to get rid of the cases filed against him during the elections. No prudent man will just give away such a huge amount without any liability. This is nothing but cock and bull story cooked up by the accused to get away from the clutches of law and the same is not permissible", the court observed.

The complainant HR Huvappa Gowda, a resident of Chikkamagaluru City, filed the complaint against accused Kumaraswamy in 2021. Both the complainant and accused are known to each other.

After killing 2 in Kodagu, 'man-eater' tigress captured

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Madikeri

THE tigress that is believed to have killed two estate labourers of a family within a span of 15 hours in south Kodagu was captured by the Forest Department officials on Tuesday. The big cat had killed Chetan (18) and Raju (65) belonging to the Jenukuruba community at Churikadu in K Badaga village. The incidents had created panic among the people living in the region.

It took 150 foresters equipped with weapons, including staff from outside the district, four tamed elephants and expert veterinarians to trap the man-eater which is aged between 11 and 13. She has been shifted to the rescue centre in Mysuru.

Foresters of Virajpet and Nagarahole Wildlife Divisions overpowered the big cat around noon at Nanachi Gate of Nagarahole Tiger Reserve near Kutta. The mahouts of the tamed elephants Abhimanyu, Ashwathamma, Bheema and Ganesh used in the operation scouted acres of coffee estates in the forest fringes even as several teams of foresters combed a vast area. The wild animal was tranquilised by Deputy Range Forest Officer Ranjan and his team while mounted on an elephant.

Gopal KP, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Nagarahole Wildlife Division, said, "The tigress has injury marks on her body, including legs, which could be the result of a territorial fight." The captured tigress was earlier given an ID at Veeranahosahalli.

The tigress captured on Tuesday is aged between 11-13 and has been shifted to the rescue centre in Mysuru | EXPRESS

EXPRESS READ

State budget session to conclude on February 24

Bengaluru: Announcing the decisions taken at the Business Advisory Committee meeting on Tuesday, Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri said the session will conclude on February 24, and urged all MLAs to be present on February 21 for a group photo in front of the Vidhana Soudha. P7

Agreement inked for Nandi Hills ropeway

Bengaluru: Setting a March 2025 deadline to commence operations on the ambitious ropeway project at Nandi Hills, the state tourism department has signed a concession agreement for executing the project with Dynamicx Ropeway Pvt Ltd. P2

CBSE board exams to begin today

New Delhi: Over 38 lakh students will appear for the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) board exams, which begin on Wednesday and end on April 5. More than 7,250 exam centres have been set up in India 26 countries abroad, CBSE said.